

Farewell Statement From Dr. Peter Butler as Outgoing Editor in Chief of *Diabetes*

Peter C. Butler

This December 2011 edition of *Diabetes* marks the completion of the 5-year term of the outgoing editorial team. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as editor with such a dedicated and accomplished team of associate editors. I thank each of them for their gift of time, their patience, their scholarship, their integrity, and their good humor. We would also like to collectively thank Edwin Gale, the former editor in chief of *Diabetologia* and Mayer Davidson, former editor in chief of *Diabetes Care*, who both gave us generous and useful advice as we took on the task of editing *Diabetes*. We would also like to thank the editorial staff at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at the American Diabetes Association office in Indiana, for assisting us in striving to give submitting authors a timely decision, even if not always one they wanted.

As *Diabetes* now moves forward under the guidance of the new editorial team led by K. Sreekumaran Nair at the Mayo Clinic, we wish the new team the very best. They are an impressive group of talented researchers that will bring new energy and new ideas to the journal. The outgoing editorial team congratulates them for agreeing to take on this ever more complex task. Oscar Wilde said, "The truth is rarely pure and never simple." With the rapid expansion in the complexity of available research tools that generate vast quantities of data, the separation of truth from artifact becomes ever more of a challenge for scientists and editors alike. The advances in technology also apply to the publication process itself. With the rapidly changing landscape of how information is published and how information is accessed, no publication can afford to stand still. The emerging electronic publishing environment offers tremendous opportunities for a publication with a leadership position in the field such as *Diabetes* but, equally, some hazards. The relative fate of Yahoo and Google illustrates how rapidly established leadership can be challenged in this era of predominance for online electronic dissemination and access of information. It will therefore be important that the impressive new editorial team is matched by a comparable commitment by the American Diabetes Association to

match the editors' ambitions for the journal. Increased sophistication in publication will certainly be required to stay in the forefront of electronic publications.

Some important steps have already been taken by the American Diabetes Association in this regard, including the use of screening tools to examine submitted manuscripts for plagiarism and inappropriate adjustments of figures. It is a concern how frequently attempted fraud in publication has been detected in the last few years, most often not by the electronic screening devices but by astute peer review. Every scientist has a story to tell about the errors of their peers in failing to support their superb manuscript. As an editor in chief, one regularly receives mail to that effect, some of it quite robust in the stated opinions, which often extend to the editor's own shortcomings. While I fully acknowledge the shortcomings of the outgoing editor in chief, after 5 years of watching over the traffic of many thousands of manuscripts, I have developed a renewed respect for scientific peer review. It is remarkable how often three reviews are concordant. Regular reviewers for *Diabetes* are typically generous in the detail and time they offer the submitting authors by way of constructive suggestions. It is interesting that those that complain the most about the peer review process are often those that most often decline to provide peer review. Also, when authors complained that we "had obviously selected the reviewers designated as nonpreferred since the reviews were recognizable as expressing the expected bias," we had actually most often selected their preferred reviewers.

So as a final thank you, I want to particularly acknowledge the peer reviewers who are so critical to the quality of the articles in *Diabetes*. Thank you for agreeing to review when you have, thank you for the gift of your time and scholarship in preparing your constructive critiques, and thank you for your flexibility in being accommodating to the collective advice of the other reviewers and the responses of the authors. For all its shortcomings, peer review works well most of the time. It perhaps deserves a similar tribute as that offered by Winston Churchill about democracy: "Democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried."

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